

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2849

FOLLOWING REPEAT MADRAS 0382 SENT ACTION NEW DELHI
24 FEB 76.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRAS 0382

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, IN, CE

SUBJ: TAMIL SEPARATIST/SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT IN SRI LANKA

REF: NEW DELHI 0847

1. WHILE THERE IS GENERAL SYMPATHY AMONG THE TAMILS OF
TAMIL NADU OVER WHAT MOST PROBABLY CONSIDER THE ILL-TREATMENT
OF TAMILS IN SRI LANKA. DIRECT SUPPORT FOR THE TAMIL
SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT IS VERY LIMITED AND, FROM ALL
INDICATIONS, DOES NOT EXTEND BEYOND A RELATIVELY SMALL
GROUP OF PERSONS ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE MAIN POLITICAL
LIFE OF TAMIL NADU. TAMIL LANGUAGE NEWSPAPERS GIVE
COVERAGE TO DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO TAMILS IN CEYLON
AND TO THE SEPARATIST MOVEMENT THERE, BUT THERE ARE NO
INDICATIONS OF DIRECT SUPPORT FROM POLITICAL PARTIES IN
TAMIL NADU. THE DMK AT MOST OF ITS CONFERENCES HAS
EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER TAMILS IN SRI LANKA, HAS
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CONDEMNED THE DISCRIMINATORY TREATMENT METED OUT TO

THEM, AND HAS URGED GOI INTERVENTION WITH THE GOSL TO REMEDY THE SITUATION. BUT BEYOND THESE EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN, THE DMK HAS NOT OPENLY AIDED THE SRI LANKA TAMILS, NOR DO WE HAVE ANY REAL INDICATIONS OF COVERT ASSISTANCE.

2. SRI LANKA DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER KODIKARA TELLS ME HE BELIEVES THERE IS NO DIRECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DMK AND THE TAMIL SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN HIS COUNTRY. HOWEVER, HE BELIEVES THERE IS A SMALL GROUP OF EXTREMISTS AND PAN-TAMILPROMOTERS IN TAMIL NADU WHO ARE GIVING SHELTER TO EXTREMISTS FROM SRI LANKA, SUCH AS THE MURDERERS OF JAFFNA MAYOR DURAIYAPPA AND WHO ARE PROVIDING SOME FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO TAMIL EFFORTS IN SRI LANKA. KODIKARA IDENTIFIED R. JANARDHANAN AND THE WORLD TAMIL YOUTH FEDERATION AS AMONG THIS GROUP. HE SAID JANARDHANAN HAD COLLECTED 8000 POUNDS STERLING IN LONDON, AND WAS ALSO COLLECTING FUNDS IN MALAYSIA WHICH WOULD BE USED TO HELP THE SRI LANKA TAMIL CAUSE. HOWEGER, KODIKARA SAYS HE HAS FOUND INTEREST AMONG TAMILS HERE IN DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING SRI LANKA TAMILS TO BE MUCH LESS THAN HE HAD ANTICIPATED IT WOULD BE. HE BELIEVES ALSO THAT THE REMOVAL OF THE DMK GOVERNMENT HERE IS A SETBACK FOR THE TAMIL SEPARATIST MOVEMENT IN CEYLON, NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT REMOVES A PSYCHOLOGICAL RALLYING POINT, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT DEMONSTRATES THE EFFECTIVE RESISTANCE WHICH GOVERNMENTS CAN EXERT AGAINST PROPONENTS OF AUTONOMY AND SEPARATION. KODIKARA SEES LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF INDIA'S BECOMING AN ACTIVE OPERATIONAL AREA FOR A TAMIL MOVEMENT IN SRI LANKA.

3. WITH REGARD TO THE FATE OF TAMIL REPATRIATES, ACCORDING TO A JANUARY 14, 1976 STATEMENT IN MADRAS BY GOI FOREIGN SECRETARY KEWAL SINGH, ABOUT 157,500 PERSONS OF INDIAN ORIGIN HAD BEEN REPATRIATED FROM SRI LANKA AND ABOUT 90,000 PERSONS HAD BEEN REGISTERED AS SRI LANKA CITIZENS AT THE END OF 1975. EIGHTY-EIGHT PERCENT OF THE REPATRIATES ARE ESTATE LABOR. A LARGE MAJORITY OF REPATRIATES ARRIVING IN TAMIL NADU ARE SETTLED IN

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COLONIES IN THE SOUTHERN DISTRICTS OF RAMANATHAPURAM, PUDUKOTTAI, THANJAVUR AND TIRUCHIRAPALLI, THEIR ANCESTRAL HOMES. THE GOI MINISTER OF REHABILITATION AND THE GOTN DIRECTOR OF REHABILITATION ARE IN CHARGE OF REHABILITATION ARRANGEMENTS IN TAMIL NADU. SO FAR NEARLY 5000 FAMILIES HAVE BEEN SETTLED ON LAND COLONISATION SCHEMES OR FOUND EMPLOYMENT IN PLANTATIONS AND INDUSTRY, ESPECIALLY SPINNING MILLS.

PROJECTS FOR REHABILITATION OF THE REPATRIATES HAVE ONLY RECENTLY REACHED THE TAKE-OFF STAGE. QUITE A LARGE NUMBER OF REPATRIATES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FIND JOBS ON THEIR OWN OR RECEIVE HELP FROM THEIR RELATIVES AND SO HAVE NOT HAD TO APPROACH GOVERNMENT FOR REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE. THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS OF ANY LARGE SCALE DESTITUTION OR ACUTE FINANCIAL DISTRESS. HOWEVER, IN JANUARY 1975 THERE WERE PRESS REPORTS OF ABOUT 25 DEATHS DURING THE PREVIOUS THREE MONTHS AT THE REPATRIATES COLONY IN PUDUKOTTAI DISTRICT. WHILE OFFICIAL CIRCLES DESCRIBED THE DEATHS AS DUE TO "PURGING" (HEALTH HAZARDS CAUSED BY FOOD POISONING) RESIDENTS OF THIS COLONY ALLEGED THAT THEY WERE DUE MOSTLY TO "STARVATION," BECAUSE THE CROPS HAD WITHERED DUE TO SEVERE DROUGHT CONDITIONS AND THE REPATRIATES COULD NOT SECURE ANY ALTERNATE JOBS AND HAD PLEDGED OR SOLD ALL THEIR BELONGINGS. ALTHOUGH RESETTLEMENT PROJECTS FOR THE REPATRIATES ARE SPREAD OVER THE FOUR SOUTHERN STATES THE GOVT HAS TO BEAR THE LARGER SHARE OF THE BURDEN AS MOST REPATRIATES ARE TAMILS AND DESIRE TO SETTLE DOWN IN TAMIL NADU. FOR MOST OF THE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMS THE CONCERNED INDIVIDUAL STATES GET FUNDS FROM THE GOI. BUT STILL THE CONCERNED STATES ALSO HAVE TO SPEND CONSIDERABLE AMOUNTS OF MONEY IN DRAWING THE SCHEMES, ETC. THE GOI HAS LAUNCHED RECENTLY A TEA PLANTATION IN THE NILGIRIS, FOUR RUBBER PLANTATIONS (ONE IN KANYAKUMARI, TWO IN KARNATAKA, AND ONE IN KERALA), A COFFEE PLANTATION (NEAR VISAKHAPAWNAM IN ANDHRA PRADESH) AND A CENCHONA PROJECT IN THE ANNAMALAI (TAMIL NADU). NEARLY 2000 FAMILIES HAVE BEEN ABSORBED BY THE ABOVE PLANTATIONS. ANOTHER 2000 FAMILIES HAVE BEEN SETTLED THROUGH 38 GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED LAND COLONIZATION SCHEMES.

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NEARLY 800 FAMILIES HAVE BEEN FOUND EMPLOYMENT IN GOVERNMENT-ASSISTED SPINNING MILLS AND INDUSTRIAL SCHEMES AIDED BY THE REPATRIATE BANK.

4. THOUGH VARIOUS KINDS OF ASSISTANCE ARE GIVEN BY THE GOVERNMENT SUCH AS PRIORITY RATING AT EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGES, SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CHILDREN, LOANS FROM THE REPATRIATE BANK TOWARD CAPITAL FOR SETK EMPLOYMENT SCHEMES, ALLOTMENT OF LAND FOR CULTIVATION, LOANS FOR HOUSING, JOBS OR LOANS FOR STARTING A TRADE AND STIPEND FOR JOB TRAINING, THE MAJOR PROBLEM OF THE REPATRIATES, WHO ARE MOSTLY ESTATE LABOR, IS THE INADEQUACY OF JOBS IN THE ESTATES IN INDIA. THE GOI-SPONSORED PLANTATIONS ARE ONLY IN THE TAKE-OFF STAGE. ONLY 2000 OUT OF THE ESTIMATED 45,000 FAMILIES TO BE REHABILITATED ON

PLANTATIONS HAVE SO FAR BEEN ABLE TO GET JOBS
ON THE PLANTATIONS. THE REPATRIATES ARE NOT EXPERIENCED
IN AGRICULTURE AND ARE THEREFORE UNABLE TO UTILIZE THE
LANDS ALLOTTED TO THEM FOR AGRICULTURE PURPOSES.
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